

MY VOICE

Educational reform needs to be next

I don't think people realize exactly what the word "reform" means nowadays.

Reform is what shaped this country, and is partially responsible for the start of the Civil War.

This wave of passion and reconstruction was sparked by President Abraham Lincoln, who is considered one of the presidents that turned America into what it is today: a powerhouse in the global realm.

Obama is attempting to do the same with an almost as hollow America that Lincoln dealt with, but with less passion. Less motivation by the American people to realize that they are re-writing the history books for the future in what is accomplished, or not accomplished, in just the next few short years.

The new question for current college students should be what are we going to write in the history books for generations to come? More world hatred toward a country destroying global markets? I surely hope not.

Until recently with the health care reform there has not been a major national reform policy that has been put through Congress since the great "New Deal" days of the FDR era.

Without a massive realization by America, from the average

businessman to a senator on Capitol Hill, the future looks bleak.

Now, I am not saying Obama is doing the best job he can for the simple reasons that nothing has been carried through and that one major reform has been put on the back burner: education.

The No.1 thing that comes to mind when thinking about future should be educational reform. Our public high schools have slipped through the cracks of American society in a way that not all kids have an equal opportunity walking out of high school.

The future of this country is in the hands of people who must have the courage to stand up and call for changes in situations where we see problems. Every high school graduate has lived through the problems that arise in the public schooling system.

In my own personal experience, the teachers went on strike for a brief period because

they felt they were not being compensated enough for their extra duties as teachers.

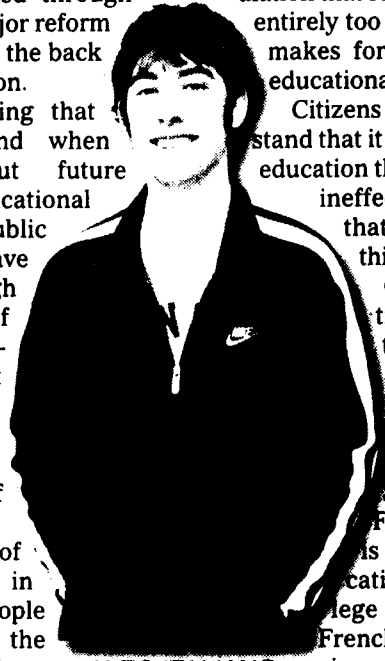
All in all, the poor budgeting skills of administrations coupled with a very impatient population that feels it is paying entirely too much in taxes makes for a very weak educational system.

Citizens do not understand that it is their lack of education that elected the ineffectual people that are causing this malfunction.

Other countries' educational reform systems are leaps and bounds ahead of the United States. The French system is unique, allocating free college tuition to any French citizen who is willing to put forth the effort.

Every French student takes a high school exit exam called the Baccalaureate exam (the Bac for short).

Basically this exam places students into universities based on the results of this test and is taken extremely seriously in France. Some high school stu-



ALEC ITALIANO
sports editor

MY VOICE

A pleasant surprise when turning 21

There are major milestones in your young lives that we all spend years looking forward to.

The first, of course, is turning 10. For whatever reason, when you are nine years old, nothing is more exciting than the thought of finally hitting double digits. Becoming a teenager at 13 can only be topped by turning 16 and getting that driver's license that your parents wish you weren't old enough to get.

At the age of 18, you finally become an "adult" and can finally buy all of those cigarettes and adult entertainment you've been looking forward to.

As college students, we have all experienced the excitement of reaching these points in our lives, and of course, we continue to wait for the most exciting one.

At 20 years old, 2009 crawled by as I waited for Dec. 14 to roll around to celebrate the final milestone of a young life that every college student anticipates: turning 21.

While many may tell you that turning 21 is more anticlimactic

than you think or that the excitement fades quickly. I'd like to reassure you that turning 21 is everything that it is built up to be.

Although I heard the same negativity in the months before my birthday, my 21st was everything that I had hoped it would be and more. I had so much fun, not only because I was on my way to being 21 shots deep, but because my friends and family were so excited to help me celebrate the occasion and make it memorable.

Turning 21 is like joining a club, and everyone who is already a member can't wait to initiate you and share the legal drinking experience. You'll find this to be very true in the weeks following your birthday, when free drinks will be flying in your direction before you can even finish your last one.

However, turning 21 is about more than the drinking. A whole new social environment is opened up to you, and although there may be downsides, such as the expense, there will never be another opportunity to say, "there's nothing to do tonight."

A 21st birthday is also about celebrating adulthood. At this point, you have reached the age where nothing (legal) is off limits. While this may not sound like much, there is value in this freedom that I definitely came to appreciate.

You will only have one 21st birthday. Just as you commemorate each birthday before, perhaps with a super sleep-over, a driver's test, or even a trip to AdultMart, celebrate your 21st to the fullest. Personally, I know that my friends and I will never forget the memories that we made on our 21st's. So, don't let the negativity of others get to you. Go out, get wild, and make it an experience to remember.



MARISSA LANICH
staff writer



MY VOICE

Why we should support health care

Before I get started, let me first say this: I know politics like the back of Barack Obama's hand.

Having never seen his freakishly lengthy hands in person, one can assume that I do not understand politics, and I can add that I do not care about them that much.

It seems, however, that everyone has a vested interest in this new health care bill being passed. Here's what I get from it: millions of uninsured Americans will be gaining health care. Point blank, that's what it is.

I haven't seen teenagers talk about politics like this since the popular emergence of the aforementioned president, Barack Obama. I've seen Facebook statuses dedicated to people's opinions on the health care bill. I've seen statuses such as "Republicans make me laugh," and "Great, now we have to pay for lazy, unemployed people's health care." So-called Republicans and Democrats are arguing with each

other over a health care bill that they have absolutely no hand in deciding, yet pay for.

Maybe that's why I hate politics.

I don't care whether you are Republican, Democrat, part of the Green Party, or part of the Party in my Pants Party. It's time to take a look at this health care bill humanely and with a sense of compassion.

As someone who doesn't consider himself as a part of any party, let me offer an unbiased point of view. While I'm not quite sure if this was the right health care bill, I can say that something needed to be done.

While most of us live in a world where we can go to the

doctor when we have a stuffy nose and a cough, there are people out there without health care that are gravely ill and can't afford to go to the hospital.

Are some of them lazy and unable to get a job? Absolutely. But there are those out there that for whatever reason are unable to hold a job. And for those that truly need help, this bill will likely be providing them with care through a few tax dollars.

Living in a materialistic world, we turn a blind eye to these people that we are now finally helping so that we, in return, can buy the latest version of everything and anything.

Now, I have no idea how much that tax will be, but I can't imagine it being anything

ridiculous. Why not save up your change, deposit it all around tax season and pay for it that way? Instead of thinking about yourself, why not think about the rest of humanity.

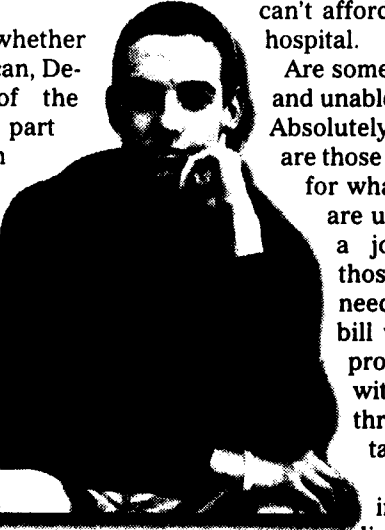
I'm not just talking about this health care bill; I'm talking about life. We all have times where we wish someone would lend us a helping hand. You know what it's like to be in their Nikes (or, in the case of those helped by the health care bill, their dollar store shoes).

You know, in 2008, teens around the world backed Barack Obama, backing his campaign of "change we can believe in."

Here's some change that I can believe in: maybe it's time to stop thinking about having and start giving. Even just a small step can help.

If you refuse to help those who can't afford health care, why not help those in despair, those who don't have anything to wear, or those who need help with a repair?

Yes we can.



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